with 97 countries. Presently a Total of 50 foreign airlines are operating scheduled international services to/from India. Although traffic rights have been granted to foreign airlines for operating international services to/from India under these agreements, actual operations are decided by airlines concerned according to their commercial judgement and comparative yields on different routes.

Airport experience

4966. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "International airport? More like a railway-station" appearing in the Indian Express dated 5th April, 2002 highlighting the poor services and the deplorable conditions of general cleanliness prevailing at the Mumbai Airport;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the surroundings and the services at the Mumbai Airport in keeping with the high standards of cleanline maintained and facilities available at other comparable international airports in the world?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item under the caption Airport? It's more like a Railway Station" which appeared in Indian Express dated 5-4-2002 mentioned short-comings and problems relating to Mumbai airport. All efforts are made by Airports Authority of India (AAI) to maintain a high standard of facilities at the international airports. Dedicated staff is deployed at Mumbai airport for keeping the toilets clean. Adequate restaurant facilities and tea/coffee vending machines are available in different parts of the terminal. Efforts are being made to strengthen the Immigration set up at international airports to reduce the time for clearance of passengers. AAI is coordinating with the State Government for encroachment removal at Mumbai airport in a phased manner, and with the Mumbai Corporation for handling the problem of stray dogs. Signages have been provided as per the international norms.

(c) A number of measures are being taken to imporve the standard of service/facilities at all international airports, including Mumbai airport. These include expansion of terminal areas, increasing length of baggage claim conveyors, providing new aerobridges, improving passenger facilitation etc.